

The most noticeable additions during the month of November were as follows:—

1. Four Brazilian Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*), purchased Nov. 17. Of this small Cormorant of the New World no examples have ever reached us before. The birds have been placed in the Fish-house, next to the American Darters.

2. A Hooded Crane (*Grus monachus*), deposited by Mr. W. Jamrach, November 21st, under an arrangement that it is to be purchased on the 1st of January next if doing well at that time.

This species, which is quite new to us, is readily distinguishable from the allied *G. leucauchen* (also from Japan) by its smaller size and the greater amount of white on the neck. Its arrival renders our series of Cranes very complete, comprising, as it now does, 19 examples belonging to 13 species.

The following extract was read from a letter addressed to the Secretary by Count T. Salvadori, C.M.Z.S., dated Turin, November 28th:—

Dr. Beccari has received from Mr. Bruijn, of Ternate, the announcement of the discovery of a new species of *Drepanornis* from the most inland point of Geelvink Bay, New Guinea. This bird is said to differ from *D. albertisi* in having the head, the hind neck, the back, and the breast black. The long feathers on the sides of the breast are said to be most brilliant. We hope to receive before long examples of this wonderful new bird.

The following papers were read:—

1. Corrections of and Additions to the "Raptorial Birds of North-western India."—Part III.* By ANDREW ANDERSON, F.Z.S. &c.

(Plate LXXXII.)

[Received November 6, 1876.]

The acquisition of two very interesting additions—the one an eastern and the other a western one—enables me to lay some further information respecting the Raptorial birds of these provinces before the Society. It is a strange coincidence that both these stragglers should have been obtained on my old collecting-ground, on the banks of the Mainpuri Canal, within a few miles of each other, as well as within the same month.

The numbers and asterisk preceding the names have the same significance as before.

The two additions now made bring up my list to fifty-four species.

* For Part II. see P. Z. S. 1876, p. 310.



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W. Smith del et lith

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POLIOAETUS PLUMBEUS

*41 bis. *POLIOÆTUS PLUMBEUS*. (Plate LXXXII.)*Haliaëtus plumbeus*, Hodgson, J. A. S. B. vi. p. 367.*Poliaëtus plumbeus*, Jerdon, Ibis, 1871, p. 336.

The accompanying Plate of this little-known Fish-Eagle will enable ornithologists to readily distinguish its characters from the allied though very distinct *P. ichthyaëtus*, from which species I have reason to believe it has not always been discriminated. As the present example, a mature ♂, making the third recorded occurrence of this Eagle in the plains*, is identical in every respect with the pair referred to in 'Stray Feathers'†, any further description of its plumage and habits would be superfluous.

It was killed at Ghirar, in the Mainpuri district, on February 9th of the present year; and had my gun been up at the time, the prize would have been easily secured, as it remained seated on a tree on the opposite side of the canal for fully half an hour. Once disturbed, the bird became very impatient; and though only taking small flights and never leaving the canal, it changed its position a dozen times and entailed a deal of manœuvring before allowing itself to be bagged. The canal was at low-water mark; and the fish which had congregated in the deep clear pools must have been the attraction to this place.

Carefully measured in the flesh, the following are the results:—Length 23·5 inches; wing from carpal joint 16·5; tail from vent 9·6; tarsus 3·5; bill, straight, including cere, 1·7; greatest expanse of foot—length 5·0, breadth 4·6, centre toe and claw straight 3·1.

The legs and feet were white, washed with light livid blue; the upper mandible was blue-black, the blue being distinctly visible; the cere, gape, and lower mandible were leaden-blue, the blue being very distinct and a good deal lighter than the upper mandible; the irides were amber-colour, and the claws were black. The pads or soles of the feet were as rough as a nutmeg-grater, thus admirably adapting them for the capture of its slippery prey.

In concluding my remarks, I wish to draw attention to the wonderful development of the ear-orifice, as well as to the slight difference there is between the sexes of this Eagle. The females, I should say, averaged from 24·5 to 25·5 inches in length, with a wing from 18 to 18·5; the males from 23·5 to 24·5, with a proportionately smaller wing. For convenience of reference, I append dimensions of the three adult specimens I have had an opportunity of examining in the flesh, and regarding the sexing of which there is no doubt:—

Sex.	Locality.	Length. in.	Wing from carpal joint. in.	Tail from vent. in.	Tarsus, in.
♂.	Kumaon	23·0	17·5	10·0	3·3
♂.	Mainpuri	23·5	16·5	9·6	3·5
♀.	Kumaon	24·5	18·0	10·5	3·4

* One, Etawah (Brooks); one, Lucknow Museum (Anderson); one, Mainpuri (Anderson).

† Cf. 'Stray Feathers,' vol. iii. p. 385.

I am not aware whether the nestling- and first plumage of *P. plumbeus* has yet been described.

*10. *FALCO SACER*, Schl.

This is probably the least to be expected of all the Raptores I have hitherto recorded from this part of the country. In short, it is the first occurrence of this noble Falcon known to me so far east of the desert country of the Punjab; and as such it makes an exceedingly interesting addition to my previous lists.

It was on February 28th last, just three weeks to a day after the capture of *P. plumbeus*, that the Saker now referred to was obtained. The plain on which this bird was shot extends for miles along the banks of the Mainpuri Canal, commencing at the junction of the Etawah road, at a place called Dhurous.

There are few localities I have worked more thoroughly than this; and it offers attractions equally great to the sportsman and naturalist. The solitary trees that are studded about this open desert-looking country are each occupied by the larger eagles and birds-of-prey generally; and the marshes offer excellent retreats for water-birds, which in numbers and variety are probably not surpassed in any part of the world. The dense fringe of brush-wood of young Sisso-trees that clothe both banks of the canal, afford shelter to our migratory Thrushes, such as *Pitta bengalensis*, *Petrocossyphus cyaneus*, *Oræcetes cinclorhynchus*, *Turdus unicolor* and *T. atrogularis* (the last-mentioned having occurred in considerable numbers last winter); while the Babool trees that overlook the water are a sure find for Brooks's new Leaf-Warbler (*Reguloides subviridis*), as well as for the *Phylloscopinæ* generally, of which group my list comprises no less than a dozen species*. The labyrinth of rank high reeds and rushes which grow in patches where the water has oozed through the bank, in many places sufficiently dense to hold pigs, harbours Rails, immense flocks of Passerine birds (including *Ploceus bengalensis*, a species not recorded by Jerdon from the N.W. P.), and several Reed-Warblers, the most interesting being the skulking *Locustella hendersoni*, and *Sylvia melanopogon*, which are amongst the least-persecuted of birds, owing to the impregnable nature of the ground they affect. Should you have exhausted the ornithological treasures of an elysium like this, you have merely to make a détour of a mile or two to fall in with Blackbuck, or, better still, to course Fawns, Hares, or the Desert-Fox†.

To return to *Falco sacer*, it was just as we had run a hare to ground‡, late on the evening of the afore-mentioned date, and I was

* A Catalogue of the Birds of the Plains proper that I have recently drawn up for the 'Provincial Gazetteer,' contains 443 species; but of course this list makes no pretension to completeness.

† *Fulpes leucopus* is not recorded by Jerdon from the N.W. P.; but it is the Fox of the large sandy downs of all the districts to the west of Cawnpore. Not long ago I killed a splendid female of this fine species within a mile of the city of Futtehghurh.

‡ Jerdon, it will be observed, on referring to his 'Mammals of India,' p. 224, was well aware of the eccentric habit of this common Indian Hare (*Lepus ruficaudatus*).

meditating with two of my brother officers who were out with me whether we had time to dig out the animal, that a Falcon was seen scouring the plain, apparently in search of food. My shikaree soon produced the bird, the first Saker I had seen in the flesh; and though it is pale rufescent, or "desert-colour" generally, the oval spots on its rectrices, and light-coloured soft parts, as compared with *Falco jugger*, convinced me that it did not belong to that species, it was not until the following morning, when I had an opportunity of comparing it with several Laggars, that I really felt comfortable in my identification.

The bird proved to be a very old but small male, measuring 18·5 inches in length, with a wing of 13·5, or about the dimensions of an undersized ♀ *F. jugger*. From the *adult* of that species it differed most conspicuously in the coloration of its soft parts, the legs, feet, and cere of the latter being *bright orange*, while in the former (Saker) the corresponding parts are of a *light dingy yellow*; the bill too was paler, the basal three fourths of the upper mandible, as also the whole of the lower one, being of a *pearly white tinged with pink*.

As the various phases of the plumage of *F. sacer* have been so fully described by Hume*, I will merely remark in reference to the adult state of the present specimen, that the head and nape (particularly the latter) are pure white, with narrow central shaft-stripes, the mantle is of a uniform pale rufescent hue, the feathers being broadly edged with rufous of a darker shade, that *all* the rectrices have large oval white spots on both webs, with the exception of *one of the central feathers, on which the spots have almost disappeared*, and that the chin, throat, and breast are pure white, with only a few clove-brown spots across the breast, the markings on the sternum, flanks, abdomen, and tibial plumes being more numerous and having the form of ovate streaks instead of spots.

Before leaving the subject of *F. sacer*, I should not omit to mention that the specimen in question has an abnormally shaped upper mandible, the tip of the bill, which is very sharp and pointed, being produced a third of an inch beyond the tooth or notch, and rounded over exactly as it is in the genus *Palæornis*. In reference to this deformity, the following remarks by Mr. Gurney (*in epist.*) will be read with interest:—"May not your *F. sacer* with the deformed bill have been a trained bird that had been turned off when it got old and past its best? I have known birds of prey acquire a similar prolongation of the upper mandible in confinement, though perhaps not to the same extent"†.

The Falcon, however, was in excellent condition, and showed no sign of previous captivity. Furthermore, it was evidently hunting on a plain that abounded with Hardwick's Uromastix, a Lizard that Jerdon has pointed out, on the authority of Punjab falconers, as constituting its "favourite food" in a feral state‡; and as I can hardly believe that a Saker that had once been trained to strike such large game as the Bustard and Crane would revert to reptilian food,

* Cf. 'Stray Feathers,' vol. i. p. 152 *et seqq.*

† I possess a female specimen of *Pyrhulanda grisea* that has a similar prolongation of the upper mandible.

‡ Cf. 'The Ibis' for 1874, p. 239.